

Whitman Asks Legislature for a New Budget System

Would Abolish Two Port Officers and Fiscal Supervisor as Economical Move—Opposes Building of Two Charitable Institutions.

REARRANGEMENT OF THE SINKING FUNDS

ALBANY, Jan. 5.—The need of a new budget system was urged to-day by Gov. Whitman in his annual message to the Legislature.

Among other economical moves he proposed the abolition of the offices of Health Officer of the Port of New York, port wardens and fiscal supervisor. He opposed the construction of the Mohawk State Hospital and the training school for boys in the Croton watershed. He would abolish the New York State Naval School.

His message was confined exclusively to a discussion of a State budget, a rearrangement of the State sinking funds and the substitution of serial for unissued sinking fund bonds and the elimination of unnecessary jobs in the State service.

In recommending a State budget Gov. Whitman does not adopt the features of the constitutional executive budget plan which made the Governor the real figure in advancing State appropriations, giving the Legislature a secondary part. Gov. Whitman's plan leaves the legislative power over appropriations as it is at present, and the only additional power favored by the Governor is the suggestion for a constitutional amendment permitting the Governor to reduce appropriations.

Power to Reduce Items.

Now he only has the power to approve or eliminate an appropriation for a specific item. Gov. Whitman thinks he should have power to reduce such appropriations.

It was learned, however, that the leading Republican Senators are not in favor of this change. It will not pass the Senate. Furthermore, if there is to be a State budget it was declared that it would be prepared by a joint legislative budget committee and not by men chosen by the Governor.

Next to favoring a State budget the most important recommendation made by Gov. Whitman would place the auditing of all expenditures by every State department except the Education Department in the hands of the State Comptroller.

Although Gov. Whitman indorses the work of the Horton Senate Civil Service Committee, which is standardizing positions in the State service, as well as State salaries, the plan of this committee is not to be accepted as a whole by the Legislature; parts of it may be worked into the State budget.

The Governor recommends abolishing the office of the State Fiscal Supervisor of State Charitable Institutions, and William M. Mallory of Hilledale, Columbia county, at a salary of \$6,000 a year, as well as the office of the Health Officer of the Port of New York and the ten port wardens of the port of New York. He also urges the abolition of the New York State Naval School. The health officer's salary is \$12,000. Each port warden receives \$2,500 and fees.

Text of the Message.

Gov. Whitman's message follows: "To the Legislature: "The most important recommendations I desire to lay before you at this time are for legislative action that will accomplish the following results:

PROVIDE the inclusion of every necessary expenditure for the conduct of the State government during each fiscal year in a single appropriation act, so framed that it will prescribe clearly and specifically how and for what purpose all State moneys are appropriated shall be used. To assist you in your deliberations, I have caused to be prepared a draft of a bill which seems to me to embody the principal features which such an appropriation act should contain.

PLACE the full control over all authorized expenditures of State moneys where it properly belongs, in the office of the State Comptroller.

CHANGE the date of the fiscal year, so as to make it begin on the first day of July in each calendar year, instead of on October 1 as at present.

AMENDMENTS to the Constitution. "I respectfully recommend to you also the preparation of two proposed amendments to the Constitution.

"One of these should be designed to provide that the future borrowings of the State be placed upon a modern and sound financial basis, either through the issue of serial bonds or through the application of actuarial methods to the regulation of sinking fund contributions.

"With regard to appropriation, the present constitution provides that the Legislature of a State budget in proper form for subsequent consideration by the Executive, including amendments or other things the right of the Executive to reduce items and granting only the right to veto, therefore also recommending the preparation of a constitutional amendment to correct these conditions. "Because of this latter constitutional limitation the Legislature is unable to act upon the budget as a whole, and for its success on the complete cooperation of the Legislature and the Executive during its preparation, so that those features which require segregation shall be final enactment be acceptable to both the Legislature and the Governor.

Conferred for Two Months.

"Realizing that I asked the representatives of the finance committees of the Legislature in October last to join with me in a budget conference. This conference has held almost continuous public hearings for two months, and representatives of nearly all the departments of the State government except the Legislature, Judiciary and elected officers have been called before it. "In addition to working out a budget form for recommendation to the Legislature the conference has arrived at tentative appropriation figures for the departments which have been examined. These figures are in many cases far below the amounts of the desired appropriations for the next fiscal year as filed with the Comptroller, and in many cases they are substantially below the amounts appropriated for the same purposes by the Legislature of 1915. But I am confident that with a further study which the finance committees of the Legislature will be able to give to the budget items very large additional reductions will be shown in the final report.

Opposes Water Supply Pollution.

"I have indicated no appropriation for the Mohawk Hospital for the insane of the New York State Training School for Boys at Yorktown. In the tentative budget proposal I recommended that the construction of these institutions be abandoned in view of the opposition of the City of New York toward the construction of them on the Croton watershed. "Regarding a decision on this matter I have ordered work on all contracts in

connection with these two institutions stopped.

"To meet the problem of relieving the congestion in the insane hospitals in the metropolitan district the reconstruction of buildings for the care of the aged insane, of which there are a large number in our State hospitals, first at Middletown and elsewhere as the necessity presents itself.

"I am assured that accommodations for 2,000 such patients can be provided at Middletown for \$700,000. If the existing appropriation for Mohawk of \$200,000 is rescinded and an appropriation of the same amount granted to Middletown the construction of buildings of this type can be started without increasing the present obligations of the State. Additional appropriations can be made later to complete the proposed buildings.

Awaits Legislative Action.

"I have not included in the tentative budget proposal for Middletown an appropriation for this purpose as such an appropriation would be subject to the adoption by the Legislature with regard to the Mohawk situation.

"When the budget conference was organized I hoped to include in the recommendations of the tentative appropriation figures the results of the work of the Senate Civil Service Committee, which has been making a scientific study of the personnel service of the State, with a view to weeding out unnecessary positions, suggesting departmental reorganizations where economies could be effected without injury to the service, and placing all State employees upon a basis of compensation which would give the State a fair return for salaries paid.

"Unfortunately, the work of the committee had not advanced far enough to justify its members in incorporating their recommendations in specific budget items. In consequence the budget conference in the tentative budget proposal, in deference to the future recommendations of the Civil Service Committee, has proposed no changes, either of increase or decrease, in the rates of compensation to be paid for the different classes of State service, nor has it proposed reorganizations, which while in many cases apparently necessary, could not be expressed in budget form except after careful and exhaustive study of departmental functions and organization.

Sees Reduction in Expenses.

"The application to the budget by the present Legislature of the results of the work of the Senate Civil Service Committee along the lines indicated I believe will result in very large reductions in the expenses of the State, below the level indicated by the tentative budget proposal. It is my earnest recommendation that the Legislature make this an important part of their budget plan during the present session.

"In the Department of Education, the Department of Health and in the provisions for the proper housing of the wards of the State in the various hospitals and charitable institutions, I have suggested increased allowances, as curtailment of these activities, it seems to me, would not be along the lines of real economy. In the case of the Department of Education, however, through the cooperation of the Commissioner of Education, the increase for that Department has been limited practically to the amount required by law to be added to the fixed annual contributions of the State to the common schools and academies.

"In the Department of Highways the proposed reduction below the level of the appropriations for 1915 is approximately \$400,000.

Sinking Funds Indited.

"One of the features of the cost of State government which shows an unusually large increase and makes a saving difficult, even with the exercise of rigid economy in the administrative departments, is the debt service of the State, which includes the payments of the sinking fund and the payment of interest on the outstanding bonds of the State. Those items in the estimate submitted to me by the State Comptroller show an increase over the allowances for 1915 of \$2,087,465.94, based on the assessed valuation of September, 1915. The total of the estimated contributions to the sinking funds for the next fiscal year required under the sinking fund provisions of the State Constitution must be based upon the assessed valuation of the State as of September, 1916. If these valuations increase during the present year as greatly as they did during the fiscal year ended September, 1915, the estimate of \$2,087,465.94 made by the State Comptroller in these items will be materially increased.

"This increase does not represent an actual need of the State to provide adequately for the amortization of State bonds but is due to the constitutional provision which fixes the contributions of the State to its sinking funds upon the basis of property values within the State at the time the contribution is made. For this reason our sinking funds are being largely inflated and the taxpayers of the present are called upon to make contributions for this purpose which properly should fall upon the taxpayers of the future.

"I earnestly recommend that a constitutional amendment be prepared by the present Legislature to correct this condition as far as it is possible and to provide that the future borrowing of the State be placed upon a modern and sound financial basis, either through the issue of serial bonds or through the application of actuarial methods to the regulation of sinking fund contributions.

"Before calling to your attention more specifically what I regard as the important features of the proposed State budget form which I have prepared for your consideration I would refer to those features of State financial methods which I believe should be simplified and consolidated, so that the control over all authorized expenditures of State moneys be placed where it properly belongs, in the office of the State Comptroller.

Specific Cases Pointed Out.

"There are now some sixty-five officers of the State and of its counties who encroach upon the proper functions of the State Comptroller and Treasurer and share with them the control over the expenditures of State moneys. A system which permits such a condition is contrary to the best practices of governmental finances.

"The Highways Department of the State is its own financial officer for the

expenditure through fifty-seven county treasurers of the entire State appropriation for the maintenance of State and county highways. Under this plan State moneys in large amounts lie unexpended in the custody of the county treasurers for a year or two years at a time. The appropriations for these purposes by the Legislature of 1915 amounted to slightly less than \$4,000,000. The proposed appropriations for next year for the same purpose total about \$3,600,000. I believe that no department should audit and pay claims resulting from its own operation.

"The Department of Public Works is likewise an independent financial officer for the State. The maintenance appropriations of this department for the year 1915 aggregated \$1,924,000. The Department of Public Works is the financial officer of the State for fourteen insane hospitals, expending approximately \$5,000,000 annually in maintenance and construction.

Plan Makes for Balance.

"An important result of the adoption of this recommendation will be that a proper proportion of balance will be reached and maintained among the various State activities, so that no one of them must be sacrificed either through an over appropriation for another, under special enactments. The plan offers not only to the Legislature but to the public a practically definite assurance of the presentation of all the financial needs of the State.

"That all appropriations other than those for active, practical, described work for construction and permanent betterments, or for the payment of sinking fund or interest charges, or for the payment of salaries and wages, or for the State, shall lapse at the end of the fiscal year of which the appropriation is made.

Reforms Advocated.

"The above are the chief examples of existing decentralization of State financial control. The only legislative action which I have recommended is that the State financial control be centralized in the office of the State Comptroller, with the segregation of financial control, results in the consolidation of the State's expense and divided responsibility, the existence of funds separate from the general fund of the State, and the commitment of certain revenues of the State to specific classes of expenditure. An example of the first type is the canal maintenance fund and of the second the fund from automobile and chauffeurs' license fee collections. The latter is reserved to be expended upon the maintenance of highways. I believe that appropriations for any State activity should be based upon the proper allowance for that activity and not upon the accident of any form of specific revenue collection.

Some Resulting Changes.

"This means that no receipts of the State shall hereafter be reserved for specific purposes except where so provided in the Constitution. This recommendation would include the abolishment of the canal maintenance fund, the highway maintenance fund from automobile taxes and the fund from collections made by hospitals or institutions for the care of pay inmates.

"I would further recommend the establishment of the principle that no payment be made out of the fund derived from income industry or from general fund except after specific legislative appropriation, except that the Legislature may permit in the case of the prison, the fund or in the case of a hospital, where an industry is conducted, the establishment of a permanent fund to provide necessary working capital for the purchase of material, which capital may be replenished by the Comptroller from revenues from industry without an appropriation only to the extent of the original legislative allotment.

Would Centralize Control.

"That in no case should any moneys be paid hereafter into the hands of any representative of a department or institution or any county, town or city, except upon the certificate of the State Comptroller that the money is due either in full from the State or is a legal share of the State in the case of services rendered (including salaries and wages) to work done or supplies and materials furnished except that the Legislature may permit the State Comptroller to transfer petty cash allowances of money to departments or State institutions to meet petty cash disbursements which shall be accounted for before the next allotment is received.

Limitations Proposed.

"The limitations proposed are, first, that there shall be no transfer between schedules for personal service and schedules for other than personal service, and that no transfers for temporary service or wages to other than temporary service or wages shall be permitted, and that no modification of the personal service schedules shall be allowed which will increase the annual rate of personal service cost above the level of expense fixed by the original act of appropriation, or which shall increase the annual rate of compensation of the head of a department, board, office or commission, or the deputies thereof.

"By the same use of the Executive order on request of the departments, transfers between scheduled items supporting appropriations for other than personal service will be permitted. The benefits which will be derived from this form of State appropriation are so obvious and so numerous that I need not enter into detail concerning them in this message.

"One of the most important features to which I may refer, however, is that through this form of enactment the Legislature may express its administrative policy in the terms of exact appropriation. The terms and conditions attached to the budget may be used after appropriation to enforce administrative control and to compel economies impossible in the non-scheduled or partially scheduled budget plan. All the salaries and wages to be paid by the State are shown against the title of the various positions in the activities to which they are assigned.

Officers He Would Abolish.

"I recommend that the office of the Fiscal Supervisor be abolished. I recommend that the office of the State Comptroller shall immediately be so organized that these proposals may be carried out without delay.

"I recommend that the office of the Board of Port Wardens of the Port of New York be abolished as not representing a proper State function as soon as the port of New York is returned to the Federal Government.

"I recommend that the New York State Naval School be abolished in the interest of economy, and in view of the fact that the State has no educational needs of the State. Under the circumstances it does not appear to be good public policy to feed, clothe and maintain pupils at this school at an annual cost of \$100,000 or approximately 100 pupils.

"I recommend further that the training school for boys be returned to the Federal Government.

"My recommendations to the Legislature with regard to the State budget are as follows:

"That the fiscal year of the State shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30 following, and that the recommendations I am making to the Legislature be the basis of the State budget for the fiscal year from October 1 to July 1.

"That all appropriations or reappropriations for a fiscal year shall be in one bill, and that no appropriation or reappropriation shall be made for a fiscal year except by a bill which shall be passed by the Legislature before the end of the fiscal year of which the appropriation is made.

"That all appropriations other than those for active, practical, described work for construction and permanent betterments, or for the payment of sinking fund or interest charges, or for the payment of salaries and wages, or for the State, shall lapse at the end of the fiscal year of which the appropriation is made.

"That all appropriations shall be made so as to clearly and specifically prescribe how all State moneys are to be used.

"That all appropriations shall be expressed in items closely associated so that knowledge of the total expenditures for each class of activity or for each department during a session, are made the subject of one legislative consideration.

"That the State shall have a single fund for the payment of salaries and wages, including regular and temporary salaries, and regular and temporary wages, and that the salaries of regular employees, salaries of temporary employees, the wages of regular employees and the wages of temporary employees be segregated.

"That appropriations for the expenses of maintenance, other than the personal service of departments or State activities, shall be made subject to schedules classified according to kinds of expense, and that no appropriation for maintenance or other than maintenance shall be made for which they are established.

"In the tentative budget proposal, the appropriation for the maintenance of the State, except for the maintenance of the State, shall be made subject to schedules classified according to kinds of expense, and that no appropriation for maintenance or other than maintenance shall be made for which they are established.

Since which I shall desire later to communicate to your honorable bodies. "CHARLES S. WHITMAN."

WANTS SEA SCHOOL KEPT

Capt. McMurray of the Newport Opposed to Governor's Idea.

The news that Gov. Whitman's economic message to the Legislature recommended the abolition of the State Naval School and the returning of its school ship, the old gunboat Newport, to the Federal Government was received yesterday aboard the Newport with sorrow but with determination to put up a fight for existence.

Capt. Frederick S. McMurray, who brought the ship back a few days ago from a five months cruise to San Francisco, Hawaii and Panama, sees in Gov. Whitman's plan a blow at two great national issues, preparedness and the upbuilding of a merchant marine.

"This is no time to stop our work," he said. "Right now there is more demand for our graduates than there ever has been. We graduated forty-three young fellows while we were stuck at Panama by the slides, and every one of them had a good job waiting when he got to New York. Everybody is saying that the United States needs a merchant marine and that the navy should be enlarged. Everybody is saying that we need officers. We turn out men who are fully qualified to be officers."

"The people of New York city ought not to stand for stopping our work. Most of our graduates are employed in commerce out of this port. I believe Gov. Whitman's great objection is the individual cost of educating a man, about \$1,600 for the two years. Gov. Glynn never complained. If they would give us a larger vessel that would accommodate twice the 100 men we can accommodate, we could cut the individual cost, also we have \$100,000 coming from Congress—an appropriation we never have collected."

Capt. McMurray also pointed out that last year the school returned \$10,000 of appropriated money to the State Treasury. The naval school has been in existence forty years, but until two years ago was a city enterprise. In all, it has graduated 2,800 men, who, when educated, were from 16 to 20 years old. The Newport, which has both steam and sails, was given to the school in 1867. Her guns were dismantled, but Capt. McMurray would like to have them replaced and institute gun drill and rifle practice.

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